



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AUSTIN WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL PERJURY CHARGE

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced that Damita Houston, age 39, of Austin, faces up to five years in federal prison after pleading guilty to one count of perjury stemming from false testimony she gave in January 2007 in a federal felony drug trafficking trial.

Appearing before U.S. Magistrate Judge Robert Pitman late yesterday afternoon, Houston admitted that on January 9, 2007, she was called as a witness for the defense in the federal criminal jury trial of *United States v. Kirston Brown*. Brown was charged with possession with intent to distribute crack cocaine and conspiracy to commit that offense. After she was placed under an oath to tell the truth, Houston, who claimed she was a former girlfriend of Brown's, testified in Brown's defense that the crack cocaine found on Brown's person and elsewhere in a residence was hers and that Brown did not possess and had no connection to the crack cocaine. In light of her testimony, the court permitted Houston to consult with a lawyer while she was still subject to questioning. After meeting with a lawyer, Houston refused to testify further and be cross-examined. Later that same day, Brown pleaded guilty to the drug trafficking charges he was facing. In pleading guilty to the perjury charge, Houston admitted that she knew her testimony that Brown did not possess and had no connection to the crack cocaine was false.

"While every defendant is entitled to call witnesses and present a defense, we cannot and will not tolerate witnesses who attempt to undermine the cause of justice by knowingly violating their oaths and giving false testimony in federal court," said U.S. Attorney Johnny Sutton.

Sentencing for Houston has not yet been scheduled.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Matthew Devlin.

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